

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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July 11, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I am writing today to suggest a change to our House Franking Rules that would bring the House of Representatives into the 21st Century and help shine sunlight into the operations of the People's House.

With good reason, there are no restrictions on our ability to conduct radio, television or newspaper interviews or conversations in our official capacity, and these interviews are often done using our office computers or telephones. These interviews can and often do appear in the same publication or broadcast alongside political or commercial advertising.

There is no logical distinction between communications using these old media outlets and communications using new media on the Internet. Therefore, I am recommending that our House rules treat communication over new media outlets on the Internet the same way we treat communication over the old, traditional media outlets. That is, without any restrictions except for common sense, including no video or photographs from the House floor.

We were elected because our constituents trust our good judgment, and the rules of the House should respect our good judgment as well. Obviously, we all know and will continue to honor the necessary prohibitions against seeking personal enrichment or any campaign-related activity while communicating in an official capacity using official resources.

Congress needs as much sunshine as possible, and these new media sources can bring our constituents right into the halls of Congress with us. I know you have repeatedly stated your commitment to making Congress transparent to the people we represent, and treating new media like old media will achieve that goal.

I am personally committed to refraining from any mention of political party affiliation in all of my future communications on this subject with you and our House leadership here or in any media outlet, new or old. I will endeavor to work with you in an open, honest, and sincere effort to make Congress truly transparent, and to help make each one of us real time representatives.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Culberson".

John Culberson
Member of Congress